



SPEECH

**His Excellency Mr Dharambeer Gokhool G.C.S.K.,
President of the Republic of Mauritius**

EVENT: IGCIC - CONVOCATION CEREMONY 2026

VENUE: IGCIC AUDITORIUM, PHOENIX

DATE: 20 JANUARY 2026

TIME: 15:30 HOURS

Protocol

His Excellency Shri Anurag Srivastava, High Commissioner of India

Dr. Kadambini Acharya Ji, Director - Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture,

Dear Graduands,

Parents,

Distinguished Guests,

All Protocol Observed.

Introduction

Namaskaar.

Sabse pehle, mera hardik dhanyavaad Shri Anurag Srivastava ji ko, Dr. Kadambini Acharya ji ko, aur sabhi aadarniya aayojakon ko, jinhon ne aaj ke is vishesh avsar par mujhe nimantran diya aur aapko yahan sambodhit karne ka mauka pradaan kiya hai.

Main aapke beech upasthit hokar atti khushi mehsoos kar raha hoon.

Visheshakar, is liyeh, kyonki is varsh ka deekshaant samaaroh vishesh mahatv rakhata hai.

I understand that this event is being held after an interval of five years, following the prolonged disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the complex logistical challenges that accompanied it.

Mujhe pata hai ki kovid-19 mahaamaaree ke kaaran

Lambe samay tak vyavadhaan aur uss sey jurey jatil logistical chunautiyon ke baad,

Yah aayojan paanch saal ke antaraal ke baad aayojit kiya ja raha hai.

The last such convocation took place in November 2018, in the distinguished presence of the-then Acting President of the Republic, H.E Mr Barlen Vyapoory.

Pichhalee baar aisa deekshaant samaaroh navambar 2018 (do hazaar athaara) mein hua tha,

Jis mein ripablik ke uss samay ke acting president, Shri Barlen Vyaapooree ji ki khaas maujoodgee thee.

As tradition would have it, the President of the Republic presides over this prestigious occasion.

Aapko maloom hoga ki parampara ke anusaar, iss khaas mauke ki adhyakshata Ripablik ke Rashpati karte hain.

Yet today, I address you not only as Head of State, but also in my capacity as a former Minister of Education, and as an academic who has devoted nearly five decades to teaching, mentoring, and intellectual engagement at the University of Mauritius and other universities.

Par aaj, main aapase na sirf Ripablik ke Rashpati ke natey

Balki ek poorv shiksha mantree ke taur par, aur ek aise akademik ke taur par bhee, jisane morishas yoonivarsitee aur doosaree yoonivarsiteeon mein padhaane, mentoring aur intellectual engagement ke lie lagabhag paanch dashak die hain.

It is therefore an honour to share this meaningful moment with all of you here at Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture - an institution that continues to occupy a distinguished place within the intellectual and cultural landscapes of Mauritius and a dynamic conduit of the enduring friendship between our land and Mother India.

I commend and congratulate the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture and the High Commission of India for their sustained commitment and cultural stewardship, which have made today's accomplishments possible, and I extend my warm congratulations to all graduands and their teachers and families.

These literary and cultural initiatives, in addition to diplomatic and bilateral engagements, build people-to-people bridges and promote mutual understanding, peace and harmony - so essential in a world torn by competition, conflicts and wars.

Graduands

I understand that twenty of you are graduating in Vocal Hindustani, five in Kathak, twenty-five in Tabla, and forty-five in Yoga, across Certificate, Diploma, and Advanced Diploma levels.

I am particularly pleased to note that four students have also completed the Basic Level in Sanskrit, an Indo-Aryan language dating back to approximately 3,500 years.

In fact, on Wednesday, I welcomed 25 students of the Sulabh Sanskrit Class, an initiative of Sanskriti Sansthan, at the State House, accompanied by Acharya Puran Tiwari ji.

These young learners, from primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, recited Sanskrit shlokas and mantras with so much confidence and clarity.

I must say I was deeply impressed by their love for the language, and their dedication which has also inspired their parents to engage with Sanskrit themselves.

This reflects the true principle of *Gyan* - holistic learning that builds from the familiar to the complex - and I fully support its promotion to ensure classical knowledge traditions remain vibrant and meaningful.

I also extend my congratulations to the ninety-five participants receiving certificates for their contributions to National and Republic Day celebrations by the High Commission of India.

We must gear our efforts towards initiatives that connect communities, foster understanding, and cultivate shared cultural and intellectual values.

In this spirit, I also wish to acknowledge the ongoing work of the Indian High Commission through programmes such as Hindi classes at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture.

Reflections

Distinguished Guests,

It is clear that if we are to build a society that is both resilient and visionary, we must recognize and promote education and culture as inseparable from the ethical, social, and civic responsibilities of our times.

In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, Mauritius stands at a crossroads - balancing economic development, environmental stewardship, social cohesion, and cultural continuity.

Disciplines such as music, dance, yoga, and classical languages are no longer mere artistic pursuits; they constitute the very foundations of a harmonious, healthy and happy society.

They cultivate discipline, mindfulness, ethical reflection, and a deeper appreciation of our shared heritage, serving as essential pillars for holistic education and responsible citizenship.

Message to Graduands

So, I would like to encourage our learners: take full advantage of your education - not merely to acquire knowledge, but to enrich your values, shape your character, and cultivate the judgment necessary for responsible citizenship.

Remember that no algorithm, platform, or certificate can substitute for human values and your emotional intelligence –qualities like empathy, integrity, respect, and moral judgment - which must guide your professional and personal decisions.

The world you inherit will demand adaptability, critical thinking, the courage to apply knowledge responsibly and compassion for weak, vulnerable and those with special needs.

Harness technology wisely; preserve the depth of knowledge, and always uphold the shared values that bind our humanity.

Closing remarks

On this optimistic and thoughtful note, allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations once again to all graduands and teachers; and to the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture and the High Commission of India, for their unwavering commitment to education, culture, and the nurturing of human potential.

I wish you every success, fulfillment, and joy in your journey ahead.

Namaskaar, Dhanyavaad, and Thank You.